

Black Flag

LETTER FROM THE BLACK FLAG EDITOR: WHAT IT MEANS TO BE “RADICAL”

Disclaimer: The views in the following letter are the opinions of one of the Black Flag’s editors. They do not necessarily represent the views of all individual FAA members or of the FAA collective as a whole – even though the Black Flag editors are FAA members. The FAA is a collective of free-thinking anarchists, so obviously we don’t all agree on everything. The things we do agree on are listed in our points of unity and in the collective letters and statements endorsed by the whole collective (such as the “Update on our Relationship with RAC-LA” reprinted in this issue).

This disclaimer applies to all Letters from the Black Flag editors, past (retroactively) and future, unless we explicitly state otherwise.

The “radicals” of Iran

A few years ago, I had a liberal-progressive friend who was enamored with the Iranian “Green revolutionaries” who in 2009-2010 were

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ANARCHOHIPPIE ON THE FEB. 27TH ANAHEIM KKK RALLY AND ON SAFER PROTESTS

When I heard that the KKK would be rallying to spew their hate in Anaheim, I immediately started to publicize the event to the Antifa (Anti-Fascist) community and my comrades. Apparently, others did the same thing as there was a decent turnout to Pearson Park that included Antifa activists, liberals, and other people who simply did not care for the message of hate the KKK represents and tries to spread. The park is located in a predominately Latino neighborhood, so the locals were not happy to hear of the Klan coming and decided to organize themselves.

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UPDATE ON OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH RAC-LA: AN OPEN LETTER

The following is the text of an open letter delivered by the FAA, in both print and electronic form, to RAC-LA, and forwarded to all contacts. A Spanish translation follows the English version. —Black Flag editor

Dear friends, comrades, and supporters

FAA is forced to end its official partnership with RAC-LA because of unresolved concerns about (1) the lack of democratic or horizontalist decision-making within RAC-LA & (2) the failure to exercise internal transparency within RAC-LA, especially with regard to funds. In September 2015, we met with RAC-LA to reach a compromise and/or resolve these problems, and we brought a proposal outlining our suggested solution (see the proposal below). At this meeting the unelected, unofficial leaders of RAC-LA refused to consider any possible compromise or resolution. They have maintained this position ever since.

We remain open to resolving this problem and/or reaching a compromise. However, as long as the self-appointed leadership of RAC-LA refuses to sit down in a respectful manner, as equals, to reach such a compromise or resolution, we are forced to end formal relations between our two groups.

We remain committed to the goals of food justice and the building of communities that

are “revolutionary” and “autonomous” in Los Angeles, and we remain supportive of the Sunday food distribution efforts. We regret that this split between our groups has taken place, and we remain open to respectful, good-faith efforts to resolve these outstanding differences.

In solidarity,

The Free Association of Anarchists (FAA)

“We remain open to resolving this problem and/or reaching a compromise.”

F@@ Proposal to Solve Internal RAC Problems

1. Voting.

We propose that all decisions require a vote of all comrades involved or affected. Each comrade gets one vote. Votes can happen at meetings, by email, and at the park (in a circle). Vote totals can be added up and reported at the next meeting, over email, and at the park.

2. Money.

We propose that monthly treasury reports are maintained neatly and shared with comrades. We propose a binder in the RAC space and a report at every meeting.

3. Conflict Resolution.

We propose developing a process for resolving



interpersonal conflicts at meetings. We can then use this process to resolve problems and restore damaged relationships. We will propose one possible process at this meeting, but we are open to working within RAC to develop our own process (or processes) together.

4. Work.

We propose asking comrades to sign up for specific tasks for new and ongoing work. After seeing how many comrades sign up for different tasks, we can figure out what work we can realistically accomplish.

Spanish Translation

Estimados/as amigos/as, compañeros/as, y seguidores/as,

FAA se ve obligado a terminar su asociación oficial con RAC-LA debido a preocupaciones no resueltas sobre (1) la falta de toma de decisiones democráticas y horizontal dentro de RAC-LA y (2) la falla de ejercitar transparencia

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UPDATE ON OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH RAC-LA: AN OPEN LETTER



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interna dentro de RAC-LA, especialmente con lo que se refiere a los fondos. En Septiembre del 2015, nos reunimos con RAC-LA para llegar a un acuerdo o resolver estos problemas, y llevamos una propuesta delineando nuestra solución sugerida (encuentre la propuesta abajo). En esta reunión los/las líderes no elegidos/as, no oficiales de RAC-LA se negaron a considerar cualquier posible compromiso o resolución. Ellos/as han mantenido esa posición desde entonces.

Nosotros seguimos abiertos a resolver este problema y/o llegar a un compromiso. Sin embargo, durante el tiempo que el liderazgo autoproclamado de RAC-LA se niegue a participar en una junta de una manera

respetuosa, como iguales, para llegar a dicho compromiso o resolución, nos encontramos forcados a terminar relaciones formales entre los dos grupos. Seguimos comprometidos a los objetivos de la justicia alimentaria y a la construcción de comunidades “revolucionarias” y “autónomas” en Los Ángeles y los mantenemos apoyando los esfuerzos de distribución de comida los domingos. Lamentamos que esta separación entre nuestros grupos haya sucedido, y seguimos abiertos a esfuerzos respetuosos y en buena fe para resolver estas diferencias pendientes.

En solidaridad,

La Libre Asociación de
Anarquistas (FAA)

Propuesta de F@@ para Resolver Problemas Internos en RAC

1. Votación

Proponemos que todas las decisiones requieran el voto de los compañeros/as involucrados o afectados. Cada compañero/a tiene un voto. Las votaciones pudieran suceder en las reuniones, por correo

electrónico, y en un círculo en el parque.

2. Dinero

Proponemos que cada mes haya un reporte nítido de tesorería para compartir con los compañeros/as. Proponemos que haya un folder en el espacio conteniendo los reportes y que se dé un reporte en cada reunión.

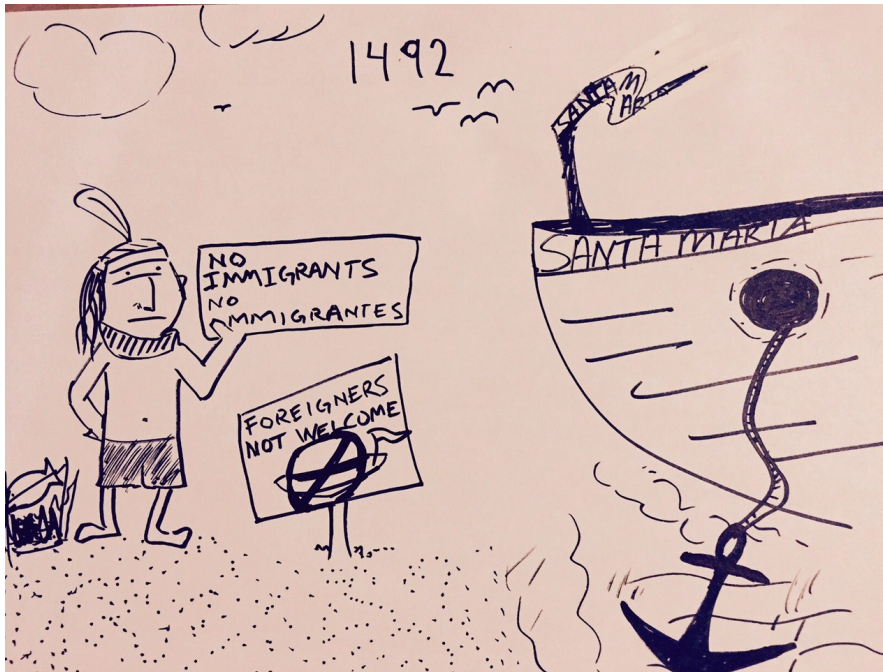
3. Resolución de Conflictos

Proponemos que desarrollemos un proceso para poder resolver problemas interpersonales en las reuniones. Podríamos, entonces, usar este proceso para resolver problemas y restaurar relaciones dañadas. Nosotros vamos a proponer un proceso en la reunión, pero estamos abiertos a trabajar con RAC para desarrollar un proceso (o procesos) junto(s).

4. Trabajo

Proponemos pedirles a los camaradas que se enlisten en trabajos específicos para nuevos trabajos y trabajos ya en marcha. Después de ver la lista de apuntes, pudiéramos ver el trabajo que realísticamente podemos lograr.





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ANARCHOHIPPIE ON THE FEB. 27TH ANAHEIM KKK RALLY AND ON SAFER PROTESTS—CON'T

(Continued from page 1)

There were conflicting reports on when the KKK fascists were actually going to show up. First the KKK social media accounts said they would be rallying and marching starting at 10 am, and then they switched it to 2:30 pm. The time was switched back and forth a few times, so those opposing the KKK decided to get to the park at 10 am, so that no matter what time the fascists showed up their message of hate would be drowned out by a counter noise demonstration.

The group of people I was with, along with other anti-fascists, started arriving to the park and mingling amongst each other at about 10:30 am. At one point there were between one and two hundred people pretty much hanging out and waiting for the KKK people to show up. There was a rally between 11 am and noon where people spoke out against racism, bigotry, and hate as well as shared stories of horribly-racist things that had happened to themselves, their families, friends, and neighborhoods. There was another event across town, a police brutality action, which coincided with this action. About half of the people ended up leaving for the other action by about 1 pm, leaving behind mostly hardcore Antifa activists. What was odd was not the fact that the KKK still wasn't there, but the fact that not a single cop was seen at all until all hell had broken loose. Personally, I have never been to a protest/counter-protest with no police to step in between the two sides. At the KKK rally in Sacramento a few years ago, there were scores of cops on foot, in cars, and even on horseback

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CRITICAL THOUGHTS ON THE ANAHEIM ANTI-FASCIST PROTEST ON FEBRUARY 27, 2016

By Mr_Generico

Everyone seems to know the basic story from the various video outlets and the journalists that were in attendance. I will be talking from my own experiences and how I think that, moving forward, communities should be prepared to deal with more events like this. Fascism hasn't been destroyed, it's just been lying dormant.

I and a few other individuals arrived in the park early in the morning. We saw people from various different political backgrounds show up. From what I could tell, no one was really ready for any kind of skirmish with the KKK. One angry punk individual approached, boasting about how he was going to "fuck up some fascists." I could smell the alcohol from him when he got close and decided to offer us some. From what I later gathered from the punk community, this individual has had a troubled history within the community—dealing with violence towards women, alcohol abuse

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and whatnot.

We were waiting in the park for over 2 hours. Various conversations from people were telling me that the KKK were trying to get a permit. Once they arrived is when a really unexpected event happened. A single SUV carrying Klan members stopped with no police presence or more Klan members. A few people approached the vehicle and began to yell and shout at the Klan. Quickly the shouting match morphed into a fist fight between the groups.

Now I'm done with accounts of that day because I know you don't want to sit here and read what happened—you can read that elsewhere. But here is my brutally-honest critique: none of the protesters knew how to fight properly from what I could tell. How stupid can you be to not think the Klan would carry weapons? They have a history of using guns, knives, pitchforks, you name it. If your plan was to just “fist fight” a fascist you should know better. These fuckers have the cops and the state on their side, which was obvious when all of them got off with “self-defense” after stabbing 4 people. Another thing was lack of preparation and coordination. We (the group I came with) were masked up and made sure to hide our identities

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ANARCHOHIPPIE ON THE FEB. 27TH ANAHEIM KKK RALLY AND ON SAFER PROTESTS—CON'T

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There was one person, who was extremely intoxicated and agitated, who was hell-bent on “beating the shit out of a fascist.” We didn't know at the time, but the man wasn't really an anti-fascist, he just hated anyone not Latino. Several different people tried to reason with the guy not to start anything when/if the KKK showed up. Some even tried to tell the guy that if he really wanted to attack the fascists, he needed to have a plan in place and maybe find some backup. Unfortunately, he was too inebriated to listen.

About 1:30 pm the KKK finally showed up in a black SUV. Trailing was a small flat trailer which held signs for people who didn't show up. The intoxicated guy ran over and started punching a fascist, and before I could even figure out what was going on, a fascist stabbed the intoxicated guy and the melee was on. I looked away from the first guy getting stabbed just in time to see another guy getting stabbed by another fascist. I heard in the background drumming and people chanting “Peaceful Protest.” The fascists remaining in the SUV drove away, leaving their comrades behind, after being confronted by people angry about the stabbings. The KKK chapter leader was saved from a beating by a Jewish professor—talk about irony. The melee continued down the street and more people were stabbed and others fighting as well. All I could do was make sure my comrades were all in my sightline and keep us from being split up and possibly hurt with no backup. After what seemed like a long time, I could hear sirens coming.

Even with supposed peace-keepers on the scene, everything was still chaotic. People were pointing out the fascists (one of whom actually shit his pants) that had stabbed people and begging the cops to give the stabbing victims first aid. It was about half an hour after things started before ambulances finally arrived at the scene. It seemed the cops were more interested in trying to hold people as witnesses and arrest counter



protesters than in giving first aid.

The whole incident just illustrates the divide between the community and law enforcement as well as fascists. The whole thing smells fishy. All of the KKK members, including those who stabbed people, were set free on relatively low bonds while those defending the stabbing victims were given outrageous bonds in an effort to keep the activists in jail. I am pretty sure the cops initially stayed away from the protest on purpose. They wanted to make the anti-fascists look worse than the KKK minions.

Looking back on all of this, I come away with more than a few lessons. Being that I do not live in the neighborhood where all of this happened, myself and my comrades did not come trying to take over the rally or tell people what to do, but I think that people going to protests need to learn basic diversity of tactics as well as how to fight and defend themselves. Of the two people that I saw being stabbed, one was

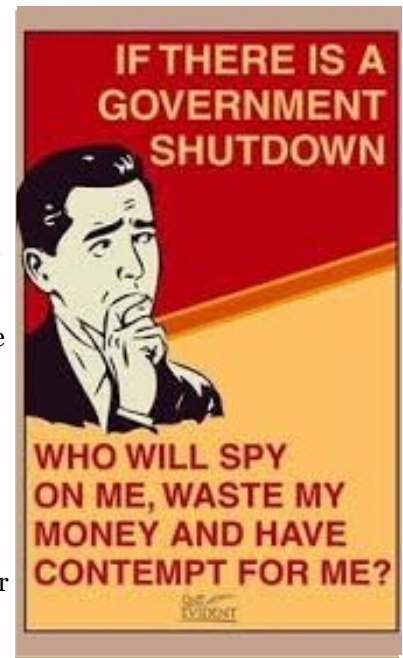
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ANARCHOHIPPIE ON THE FEB. 27TH ANAHEIM KKK RALLY AND ON SAFER PROTESTS—CON'T

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too inebriated to properly fight or defend himself, and the other didn't seem to know how to fight or defend himself period. It is never a good idea to be plastered at any event, let alone one that has the possibility of being tumultuous. You have got to be prepared for anything. I honestly did not see 4 stabbings coming. I figured on the noise demo and maybe a bit of yelling back and forth across police lines and barricades.

It was a mistake for me to assume that and not be prepared. It's a catch 22 bringing any sort of weapon to a political event. If you get arrested, the cops will slap a concealed weapons charge on you without a doubt. Since I was not thinking about anyone being stabbed, I did not even bring my mace. For anyone wanting to go to a rally like this who wants to fight, do it intelligently. First of all, if you plan on doing something illegal, put a mask over your face. This seems like a no-brainer to me, but it's amazing how many people miss this crucial step. Even if you don't plan on doing anything, mask up anyway. Currently, at most events, the cops are filming the protesters. Even if they can't arrest you, they can still make your life hell by identifying you. I've seen people lose their job after the cops called their employer and told lies about their employee. Mask up and either don't bring your phone, or turn it off. It will keep you anonymous.



Secondly, if you do something at an action that is illegal even with a mask on, leave immediately. The longer you stay, the more likely you are to be arrested. You and anyone with you should take off and get off camera and change your appearance. Even if it's just changing into a red t-shirt so you are not wearing all black anymore. Remember that all public transportation has cameras. If you take public transportation, do not block up until you get there and de-block before you get back on to go home so you can't be tracked. Always have a contingency plan. If you are with others, make sure everyone knows what the plan is and that everyone should stay together or know where comrades are at all times. It could be a place and time to meet up if things go badly and the cops get violent and people have to scatter and run away. It is extremely important not to leave anyone behind. I was pretty surprised when the fascists left their people behind. It just goes to show that racists are all out for themselves and don't value others. The whole point of a rally is bringing people together for a common cause, which implies community and having comrade's backs. If you are scared, you should not go to rallies, as this event proves that anything can happen at any time.

Finally, another thing I noticed that made me cringe was that people were talking to the cops and filming the faces of people who were fighting. First of all, you should never talk to cops. They are not your friends and they are always looking for people to incriminate themselves, or other people, especially at protests. This is another reason not to film or live-stream people doing potentially illegal things. It is the equivalent of snitching, because your footage could land someone a hefty prison sentence. If you are live-streaming, try not to get people's faces. If you are filming, darken the video or blur people's faces in the video before making it public and do not give the original footage to the cops. At the best, that makes you a collaborator to the cops. Another tip is not to speak to the corporate mainstream media (MSM). Your words will be twisted and you will be made out to either be a villain or an idiot. All MSM does is regurgitate what the police tell them. If you don't believe me, compare my version of events with the police's. I am sure they will be a lot different from each other.

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ANARCHO- HIPPIE... —CON'T

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If there is only one thing to take from this whole debacle, it is that more planning needs to go into rallies. I'm not saying that everyone should think the same, but that people need to think collectively at protests that could turn volatile, whether the volatility comes from the fascists, cops, or instigators on the cop's payroll. Before marching or direct action, contingency plans should be worked out. That way the group does not get kettled, splintered or attacked. The main objective is to keep everybody safe and free, at least from an anarchistic perspective anyway. Unfortunately, too many times I have seen poorly-thought-out actions turn into the arrest of hundreds. When someone says, "Keep moving or we are going to get kettled," they are not trying to run the march or tell anyone what to do. It is someone with experience feeling a bad vibe and wanting to keep people safe. I think if we try to do these things, then actions will go more smoothly. Hopefully, soon we can shrug off the chains of society splitting up groups and all work together to build a movement toward freedom and equality for all. No nations, no borders and viva la revolución!



-’Til Victory or Death



FROM JENNER TO DOLEZAL: ONE TRANS GOOD, THE OTHER NOT SO MUCH

The following piece by the brilliant leftist scholar Adolph Reed, highlights the contradictions of “identitarian” politics and exposes the fundamentally essentialist conceptions of race and gender underlying these politics. This is a must-read—The Black Flag Editors

By Adolph Reed Jr.

Monday, June 15, 2015—

Rachel Dolezal resigned as president of the Spokane, Washington chapter of the NAACP on Monday following accusations that she falsely portrayed herself as black.

By far the most intellectually and politically interesting thing about the recent “exposé” of Spokane, WA, NAACP activist Rachel Dolezal’s racial status is the conundrum it has posed for racial identitarians who are also committed to defense of transgender identity. The comparisons between Dolezal and Republican Jenner (I’ve decided to opt for that referent because it is an identity continuous between “Bruce” and “Caitlyn” and is moreover the one most meaningful to me) began almost instantly, particularly as a flood of mass-mediated Racial Voices who support the legitimacy of transgender identity objected strenuously to suggestions that Dolezal’s representation, and apparent perception, of herself as black is similar to Bruce Jenner’s perception of himself as actually Caitlyn. Their contention is that one kind of claim to an identity at odds with culturally constructed understandings of the

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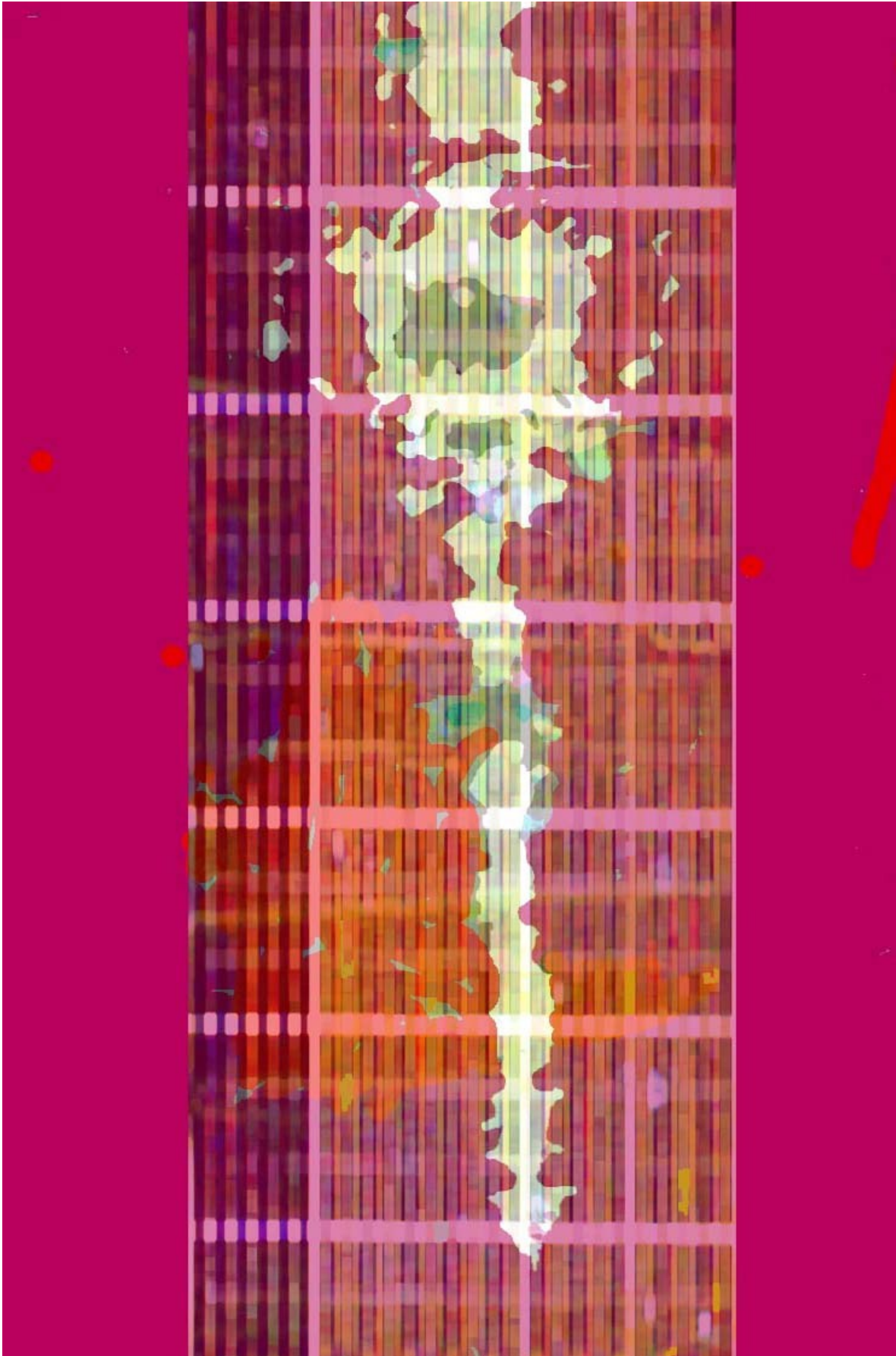
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by using code names. It makes sense especially if you are doing any sort of direct action. But the people who were most active in the skirmish didn’t wear protective gear or try to mask their identity at all.

Also, it’s important to have people on standby who are medically capable of treating any sort of wounds if need be. We as a group did not follow this simple rule and we will make the necessary changes so that it will never happen again. Once an action is completed you should never—and I mean never!—stay around a hot area with large police presence. The intention should not be to get caught. Especially since the average bail for assault is around 25-50k.

Being prepared for the worst or looking to battle cops or fascists should be planned and everyone involved should be prepared for the consequences. It seems to me people do not want to build something a little more self-sustaining and just want to get into skirmishes when the time comes. We need to strive for something a little more long term. Fighting fascists is only a small piece of a larger puzzle. We must maintain our focus not only on eliminating racism and racist violence in our communities, but also, in

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Shah's Scepter 3 by Chris Elliot

FROM JENNER TO DOLEZAL—CON'T

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identity appropriate to one's biology is okay but that the other is not – that it's OK to feel like a woman when you don't have the body of a woman and to act like (and even get yourself the body of) a woman but that it's wrong to feel like a black person when you're actually white and that acting like you're black and doing your best to get yourself the body of a black person is just lying.

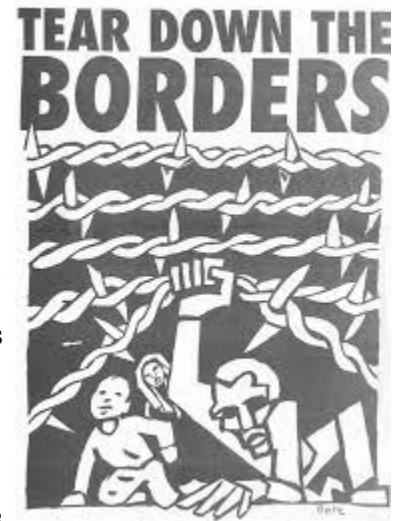
The way Zeba Blay puts it, on the Black Voices section of the HuffPo, is by declaring how important it is to "make one thing clear: transracial identity is not a thing." What is clear is that it's not at all clear what that statement is supposed to mean. It seems to suggest that transracial identity is not something that has been validated by public recognition, or at least that Blay has not heard of or does not recognize it. But there's an obvious problem with this contention. There was a moment, not that long ago actually, when transgender identity was not a "thing" in that sense either. Is Blay's contention that we should accept transgender identity only because it is now publicly recognized? If so, the circularity is obvious, and the lack of acceptance arguably only a matter of time. Transgender wasn't always a thing – just ask Christine Jorgensen.

But the more serious charge is the moral one, that, as Michelle Garcia puts it, "It's pretty clear: Dolezal has lied." But here too, it's not clear what's so clear. Is the point supposed to be that Dolezal is lying when she says she identifies as black? Or is it that being black has nothing to do with how you identify? The problem with the first claim is obvious – how do they know? And on what grounds does Jenner get to be telling the truth and Dolezal not? But the problem with the second claim is even more obvious since if you think there's some biological fact of the matter about what race people actually belong to utterly independent of what race they think they belong to, you're committed to a view of racial difference as biologically definitive in a way that's even deeper than sexual difference.

Blay attempts to deal with these issues by quoting Darnell L. Moore of Mic.com's analysis that "In attempting to pass as black, Dolezal falsely represented her identity. Trans people don't lie about their gender identities – they express their gender according to categories that reflect who they are." This claim has recurred in various formulations. Meredith Talusan asserts it most emphatically in *The Guardian*:

The fundamental difference between Dolezal's actions and trans people's is that her decision to identify as black was an active choice, whereas transgender people's decision to transition is almost always involuntary. Transitioning is the product of a fundamental aspect of our humanity – gender – being foisted upon us over and over again from the time of our birth in a manner inconsistent with our own experience of our genders. Doctors don't announce our race or color when we are born; they announce our gender. People who are alienated from their presumed gender and define themselves according to another gender have existed since earliest recorded history; race is a medieval European invention. Thus, Dolezal identified as black, but I am a woman, and other trans people are the gender they feel themselves to be.

This assessment is mind-bogglingly wrong-headed, but it is at the same time thus deeply revealing of the contradictoriness and irrationality that undergird so much self-righteous identitarian twaddle. First of



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"They are afraid of us because we are not afraid of them." -Bertha Cáceres

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all, as I've already suggested, the claim that Dolezal's identity is false and transgendered people's are true immediately provokes a "Who says?" What makes Talusan's and other transgender people's identities authentic is that they believe them to be authentic. We agree to accept transgender people's expression of belief in their authenticity. It's fine for Talusan or others to say that they are convinced that the identities they embrace are

FROM JENNER TO DOLEZAL

their real ones in some way that is not limited by their biology at birth. However, the logic of the pluralism and open-endedness of identity they assert would require that they also accept the self-reports of claims to authenticity regarding identities that may diverge in other ways from convention. Certainly, not doing so necessitates some justification more persuasive—and less Archie Bunkerish—than simply asserting "Mine is genuine, theirs is not." The voluntary/involuntary criterion isn't even sophistry; it's just bullshit. Once again, who says? Who gave Talusan, Moore, Blay and others the gifts of telepathic mindreading and ventriloquy? How do we know that Dolezal may not sense that she is "really" black in the same, involuntary way that many transgender people feel that they are "really" transgender?

The related complaint that Dolezal's self-representation is inauthentic because she "lied" about her identity is equally fatuous. To stay within the identitarian paradigm, what did Republican Jenner do for more than six decades of operating as Bruce? What does any transgender person do before the moment of coming out?

Michelle Garcia, also at Mic.com, asks, imagining that her question is a trump, "If Caitlyn Jenner can identify as a woman, why can't Rachel Dolezal say that she's black?" But why should that be the definitive criterion for accepting the self-representation? Who made that rule? Could there be something about public expectations at this point regarding the fixity of racial boundaries that would stay Dolezal from taking the bold step of announcing that she had always "known" herself to be black? The furor that has surrounded the "exposé" would suggest that is the case. Would she have felt free to do so if public awareness already accepted the possibility of racial identity as not necessarily tied to official classification? I have no idea whether she would have, and Garcia doesn't either. And, again, what about the 60+ years before Republican Jenner emerged publicly as Caitlyn? Was his privately embraced identity

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Rise like Lions after slumber
In unvanquishable number -
Shake your chains to earth like dew
Which in sleep had fallen on you -
Ye are many - they are few



FROM JENNER TO DOLEZAL-CON'T

(Continued from page 11)

as Caitlyn bogus for all those years because he didn't, or felt he couldn't, go public with it?

This brings me to the most important point that this affair throws into relief. It has outed the essentialism on which those identitarian discourses rest. Garcia asks "So why don't we just accept Dolezal as black? Because she's not." But why is she not black in Garcia's view? Well, "Her parents say she's not even close to being black." But what would that mean — that she has no known black ancestry? Is blackness, then, a matter of hypodescent after all? But, if that's what it is, then what politically significant meaning does the category have? Dolezal no doubt has her issues and idiosyncrasies, but, especially if the judgment of the NAACP counts for anything in the matter, I'm pretty sure I'd take her in a trade for Clarence Thomas, Cory Booker, Condi Rice, and five TFA pimps to be named later. Or would Dolezal's "not even close to being black" mean that she was raised outside of "authentic" black idiom or cultural experience? But whose black idiom or cultural experience would that be? Is there really an irreducible, definitive one? If so, on which Racial Voice blog or Ivy League campus might we find it?

The essentialism cuts in odd ways in this saga. Sometimes race is real in a way that sex is not — you're black only if you meet the biological criteria (whatever they're supposed to be) for blackness. And sometimes, as in Talusan's failure to distinguish gender from sex typing, gender is "real" in a way that race is not. "Doctors don't

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the long term, on stopping capitalism and the state from ruling our daily lives. I would hope the comrades who were injured make a full recovery. I would hope that next time people are more prepared and cautious of their surroundings and gauge the situation accordingly.

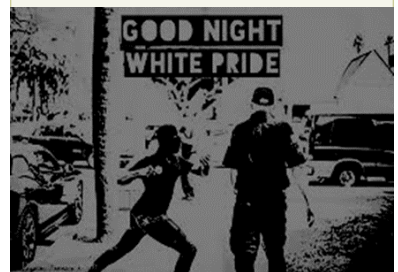
Recommended reading:

<http://www.counterpunch.org/2016/03/02/why-you-should-support-the-anti-klan-protesters-in-anaheim/>

<http://www.ocweekly.com/news/anaheims-racist-as-hell-history-beyond-the-klk-and-why-oc-weekly-covers-it-7009856>

Where to donate for the defense/ bail fund:

<https://fundrazr.com/campaigns/d16d89/sh/95WdO4>



Original photo on top; how the comrade should have been dressed on the bottom.

FROM JENNER TO DOLEZAL—CON'T

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announce our race or color when we are born; they announce our gender." I assume Talusan is referring to the stereotypical moment in the delivery room. Technically, though, the doctor announces the child's sex type, not its culturally constructed gender roles. And when exactly does Talusan presume race is determined and by whom? I'm pretty sure that in most of the United States it's still marked on one's birth certificate. That's not the delivery room, but it's pretty damn close.

Talusan's confusion of sex and gender is startlingly naïve. She contends that gender is a "product of a fundamental aspect of our humanity" and that, unlike race, the medieval European invention, gender is a "fundamental attribute" of our existence. But gender is no less culturally constructed than race. If Talusan were a little more curious anthropologically than precocious, she might have noticed that the relation between sex type and gender roles has varied wildly over the history and range of our species. But she, like Jenner, Hugh Hefner, and legions of anti-feminists, among others, naturalizes gender as melded into sex type: "Trans people transition in order to be the gender we feel inside." For those to whom it seems odd or tendentious to link the naturalizing discourses of some transgender activists and hoary anti-feminism, I recommend Elinor Burkett's fine rumination on the issue in the June 6 *New York Times*, titled "What Makes a Woman?"

There is a guild-protective agenda underlying racial identitarians' outrage about Dolezal that is also quite revealing. Nikki Lynette, writing at Red Eye exhorts "Don't Compare NAACP's Rachel Dolezal to Caitlyn Jenner." Why? Because, she contends, Dolezal benefited materially from her self-representation as black. Putting aside for the moment Republican Jenner's orchestrated payday surrounding announcement and display of transition, this is an unusual charge, one that is counterintuitive in relation to several generations of black American humor and also smacks a bit of right-wingers' insinuations about whites taking advantage of affirmative action. Nevertheless, like Zeba Blay and others, Lynette rehearses a charge that Dolezal received a full scholarship to the Howard University MFA program on the pretext

that she was a black woman. That charge is false; not only was she not admitted as black person (Howard's applications apparently didn't require racial identification); reports from faculty and students when she was there confirmed that she was not understood to be black when she was enrolled at the university. See Hillary Crosley Coker, "When Rachel Dolezal Attended Howard, She Was White," at *Jezebel*. The charge is what those making it want to be true; they assume it's true because they understand black racial classification as a form of capital.

Blay expresses this position most clearly. She objects that Dolezal "occupied positions of power specifically designated for members of a marginalized group." Blay is referring, in addition to the false accusation about the circumstances of Dolezal's matriculation at Howard, to her having belonged, while an undergraduate at Bellhaven College, to "a racial reconciliation community development project where blacks and whites lived together." Blay presents membership in that group as though it were precursor to her having duped Howard out of a fellowship that should have gone to a black woman. To Blay this pattern of duplicity culminated in Dolezal's "eventually working her way up to president of the Spokane NAACP in 2014." (Some have included a charge that Dolezal used racial misrepresentation to advance an academic career; an occasional stint as an adjunct instructor, however, doesn't square with the Iggy Azalea imagery that seems to propel this claim. It certainly would be a skimpy reward for such prodigious self-fashioning.) In Blay's narrow political universe, the NAACP branch presidency is an honorific to be awarded on the basis of ascriptive categories like race and gender, not the result of effective work on behalf of the Association's mission and goals. It is especially striking in this regard that a number of those exercised by Dolezal have at least implicitly called for the NAACP to renounce its support of her. Their commitment to arbitrary notions of racial propriety should override the Association's sense of its own concrete priorities in the actual struggle



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FROM JENNER TO DOLEZAL-CON'T



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for civil rights and social justice.

When all is said and done, the racial outrage is about protection of the boundaries of racial authenticity as the exclusive property of the guild of Racial Spokespersonship. (Blay also, with no hint of self-consciousness, complains that Dolezal's deception has "hijacked the conversation about race, during a week where the nation was focusing on police brutality in McKinney, Texas." Not only is that insipid "conversation about race" chatter the equivalent of fingernails on a chalkboard. It seems that Blay hasn't discerned that the Dolezal issue has captured such attention only because it rankles the sensibilities of those who essentialize race and that no one is making her talk about it but herself.)

Beneath all the puerile cultural studies prattle about "cultural appropriation" – which can only occur if "culture" is essentialized as the property of what is in effect a "race" [see Walter Benn Michaels, "Race Into Culture: A Critical Genealogy of Cultural Identity," *Critical Inquiry* 18 (Summer 1992): 655-685] – "same heritage and social struggles" (I doubt that Nikki Lynette was at Greensboro on February 1, 1960, Ft. Wagner on July 18, 1863, Little Rock in September, 1957, Colfax, Louisiana on April 13, 1873, the 1968 Memphis sanitation workers' strike, either of the Amenia conferences, or Minton's Playhouse any time in the 1940s), and Orwellian chatter about privilege and "disprivilege," the magical power of

"whiteness," etc. lies yet another iteration in what literature scholar Kenneth Warren has identified in his masterful 2012 study, *What Was African American Literature?*, as a more than century-old class program among elements of the black professional-managerial stratum to establish "managerial authority over the nation's Negro problem."

That is to say, as is ever clearer and ever more important to note, race politics is not an alternative to class politics; it is a class politics, the politics of the left-wing of neoliberalism. It is the expression and active agency of a political order and moral economy in which capitalist market forces are treated as unassailable nature. An integral element of that moral economy is displacement of the critique of the invidious outcomes produced by capitalist class power onto equally naturalized categories of ascriptive identity that sort us into groups supposedly defined by what we essentially are rather than what we do. As I have argued, following Walter Michaels and others, within that moral economy a society in which 1% of the population controlled 90% of the resources could be just, provided that roughly 12% of the 1% were black, 12% were Latino, 50% were women, and whatever the appropriate proportions were LGBT people. It would be tough to imagine a normative ideal that expresses more unambiguously the social position of people who consider themselves candidates for inclusion in, or at least significant staff positions in service to, the ruling class.

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FROM JENNER TO DOLEZAL—CON'T

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This perspective may help explain why, the more aggressively and openly capitalist class power destroys and marketizes every shred of social protection working people of all races, genders, and sexual orientations have fought for and won over the last century, the louder and more insistent are the demands from the identitarian left that we focus our attention on statistical disparities and episodic outrages that "prove" that the crucial injustices in the society should be understood in the language of ascriptive identity. The Dolezal/Jenner contretemps stoked the protectionist reflexes of identitarian spokesperson guilds because it troubles current jurisdictional boundaries. Even before that, however, some racial identitarians had grown bolder in laying bare the blur of careerism and arbitrary, self-serving moralism at the base of this supposed politics. In an unintentionally farcical homage to Black Power era radicalism, various racial ventriloquists claiming to channel the Voices of the Youth leadership of the putative Black Lives Matter "movement" have lately been arguing that the key condition for a left alliance is that we all must "respect black leadership." Of course, that amounts to a claim to shut up and take whatever anyone who claims that status says or does. Those of us old enough to remember Black Power and the War on Poverty also will look around to see which funders or employers they're addressing.

And, in apparent contradiction of the ontological principle of group authenticity on which the paradigm rests, reprise of the tawdriest features of Black Power hustling isn't available only to officially recognized people of color. Joan Walsh, apparently having learned the strictures of "white allyship" from being chastened by *prima inter pares* bourgeois identitarian Melissa Harris-Perry, recently showed the depths of crude opportunism this discourse enables when she race-baited Bernie Sanders as an instrument of her effort to pimp for Hillary Clinton (see her "White Progressives' Racial Myopia: Why Their Colorblindness Fails Minorities – And the Left"). For Walsh, it seems, black people don't count among the millions who would be helped by Sanders's social-democratic agenda, but Clinton,

presumably, would show proper respect by hooking them up with a #Blacklivesmatter Facebook like.

I'll conclude by returning to the Dolezal/Jenner issue. I can imagine an identitarian response to my argument to the effect that I endorse some version of wiggerism, or the view that "feeling black" can make one genuinely black. The fact is that I think that formulation is wrong-headed either way one lines up on it. Each position – that one can feel or will one's way into an ascriptive identity or that one can't – presumes that the

“Even before that, however, some racial identitarians had grown bolder in laying bare the blur of careerism and arbitrary, self-serving moralism at the base of this supposed politics.”

"identity" is a thing with real boundaries. The issue of the line that Dolezal, who has now resigned her NAACP position, crossed that made her alleged self-representation unacceptable is interesting in this regard only because it highlights contradictions at the core of racial essentialism. In addition to the problems of articulating what confers racial authenticity, if what we have read about her approach to expressing black racial identity is accurate, she seems to have embraced an essentialist version of being black no less than do her outraged critics. Wiggers do so as well, and we must admit that Dolezal's performance and apparent embrace of culturally recognized representations of black womanhood rests on an aesthetic purporting to embody respect and celebration rather than the demeaning racialist fantasies that shape the commercial personae of the likes of Iggy Azalea. Moreover, even if Dolezal may suffer from something like racial dysmorphia, the expression of her fixation has been tied up with commitment to struggle for social justice. She may have other personal problems and strained or bad relations with family members, but those are matters that concern her and those with whom she interacts. They do not automatically impeach the authenticity of her feelings of who she "really" is. And I doubt that we'd want to start a scorecard

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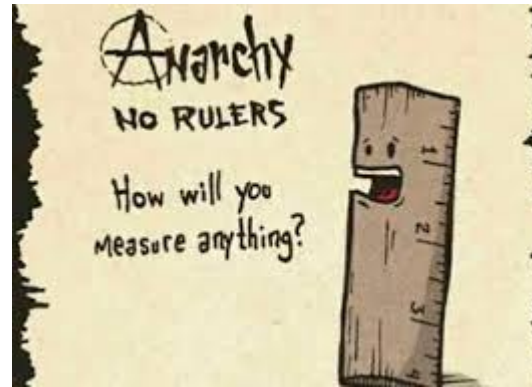
FROM JENNER TO DOLEZAL-CON'T

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comparing her and Republican Jenner on that front.

That points to the other way that this affair has exposed identitarianism's irrational underbelly. The fundamental contradiction that has impelled the debate and required the flight into often idiotic sophistry is that racial identitarians assume, even if they give catechistic lip service – a requirement of being taken seriously outside Charles Murray's world – to the catchphrase that "race is a social construction," that race is a thing, an essence that lives within us. If pushed, they will offer any of a range of more or less mystical, formulaic, breezy, or neo-Lamarckian faux explanations of how it can be both an essential ground of our being and a social construct, and most people are willing not to pay close attention to the justificatory patter. Nevertheless, for identitarians, to paraphrase Michaels, we aren't, for instance, black because we do black things; that seems to have been Dolezal's mistaken wish. We do black things because we are black. Doing black things does not make us black; being black makes us do black things. That is how it's possible to talk about having lost or needing to retrieve one's culture or define "cultural appropriation" as the equivalent, if not the prosaic reality, of a property crime. That, indeed, is also the essence of essentialism.

The problem the Jenner comparison poses is that, if identity is inherent in us in ways that are beyond our volition, how can we legitimize transgender identity—which is gender identity that does not conform with that conventionally associated with biological sex type—without the psychological stigma of dysmorphia? Confounding of sex and gender is the ideological mechanism that seems to resolve that conundrum. Thus, notwithstanding my earlier suggestion that Talusan misses the cultural fluidity of gender because she is naïve anthropologically, she may also have an important ideological reason to deny it. It is only by treating gender roles as somehow endowed at birth that she can contend that transgender identity is "almost always involuntary." That is, in the context of essentializing political



discourse, gender identity must express a condition as "natural" or inherent equivalent, or prior, to biological sex type. Transgender identity requires being read as in effect "hardwired" only within a normative framework in which access to the domain of recognizable identity deserving of civic regard depends on essentialist claims, and the only way transgender identity can meet that standard is to collapse distinctions between sex and gender – even though that move, as Burkett argues, cuts against the grain of the perspective the women's movement has fought to advance for at least the last half-century. Nor does this view acknowledge the grave political mischief ideologies of essential human difference have underwritten in not at all distant history, from segregation and other forms legal discrimination and imposition of separate spheres to genocide.

The transrace/transgender comparison makes clear the conceptual emptiness of the essentializing discourses, and the opportunist politics, that undergird identitarian ideologies. There is no coherent, principled defense of the stance that transgender identity is legitimate but transracial is not, at least not one that would satisfy basic rules of argument. The debate also throws into relief the reality that a notion of social justice that hinges on claims to entitlement based on extra-societal, ascriptive identities is neoliberalism's critical self-consciousness. In insisting on the political priority of such fictive, naturalized populations identitarianism meshes well with neoliberal naturalization of the structures that reproduce inequality. In that sense it's not just a pointed coincidence that Dolezal's critics were appalled with the NAACP for standing behind her work. It

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LETTER FROM THE BLACK FLAG EDITOR



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brutalized by their government for protesting stolen elections. My friend liked to compare the Iranian protestors to any and all “radicals” past or present, from the Spanish anarchists to the Earth Liberation Front. After one of these glowing comparisons, I made the mistake of saying that while I certainly supported the protestors’ civil rights

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may be that one of Rachel Dolezal’s most important contributions to the struggle for social justice may turn out to be having catalyzed, not intentionally to be sure, a discussion that may help us move beyond the identitarian dead end.

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Reprinted from Common Dreams - <http://www.commondreams.org/views/2015/06/15/jenner-dolezal-one-trans-good-other-not-so-much>

Adolph Reed Jr. is professor of political science at the University of Pennsylvania. For the March 2014 issue of Harper’s magazine, he wrote, “Nothing Left: The Long, Slow Surrender of American Liberals.” And more recently, along with Mark Dudzic, he wrote the essay, “The Crisis of Labour and the Left in the United States,” which appeared in the Socialist Register (2015/Vol. 51).

and condemned the government’s violence, I did not consider the protestors to be “radicals” or “revolutionaries.” Since one of their main goals was the election of an Iranian moderate, the protestors were more like Al Gore supporters in 2000 than “radicals.” If thousands here in the US had been horrifically assaulted by riot police for protesting Bush’s stolen election, I certainly would have been on the protestors’ side. If the protestors continued to march in the streets in defiance of the harsh crackdown, that would make them brave, even admirable. But it still wouldn’t make them “radicals.”

My friend was very upset by this. “How can you not call them ‘radicals’?” he demanded. “They marched in the streets for democracy while police cavalry broke up the pavement and hurled concrete chunks at their heads. People were shot. Thousands were tortured and raped in prison.”

“But simply being brave or suffering adversity doesn’t make you a radical,” I countered. “People can show bravery in support of any cause: liberal, conservative, anarchist, fascist—whatever. ‘Radical’ refers to a certain kind of politics, and I don’t think the Iranian Green movement, which advocates a liberal-moderate form of Shia Islamism, fits the bill.”

At this point, my friend became so agitated that we agreed to end the conversation. He just couldn’t understand why I would refuse to call these brave protesters “radicals.” He felt that I was insulting them.

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LETTER FROM THE BLACK FLAG EDITOR

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Of course, I didn't mean to insult—just to clarify. What does it mean to be a “radical” anyway? It must be more than just an empty term of praise...

Radicals, terrorists, and extremists: Oh My!

We hear about “radicals” quite a lot these days. The mainstream media warns of “radical Muslims” in our midst plotting the downfall of Western Civilization, while their “radical Islamist” brethren slaughter Yazidis, blow up monuments, and wreak havoc through the Iraqi and Syrian deserts like Muslim Mad Maxes in Toyota 4Runners. Not to be beat, progressives and the “Old Left” decry the rise of the “radical Right” and other crypto-fascist tendencies that threaten a resurgence of 1930s-style Fascism, while conservative commentators still maintain that Obama, Bernie, and Robert Reich are “radical reds” and “communists.” Furthermore, various breeds of socialists, along with Occupiers and anarchists—the FAA included—proudly announce their “radical” critiques of capitalism, the state, and social oppression. If Trump, ISIS, Bernie Sanders, and the FAA are all “radical,” then the word seems to have little meaning or utility beyond political mudslinging and grandstanding.

Of course, we wouldn't write an entire article just to convince you that words are often ill-defined or lose some of their stability-of-meaning (if they ever had any) in the media-saturated Information Age. Rather, we wanted to explain what we mean when we call ourselves “radical” and to use that understanding to investigate certain dangerous tendencies making their way through Left and progressive circles. But first, a word on origins:

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LETTER FROM THE BLACK FLAG EDITOR

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“Radical”: a very brief history

The Online Etymology Dictionary (<http://www.etymonline.com/>) traces the modern word “radical” back to the Late Latin *radicalis*, meaning “of or having roots,” which in turn comes from the Latin *radix*, which means “root” and is the source of our modern word “radish.” The dictionary goes on to say that the use of the word “radical” to describe political “change from the roots” began during the early nineteenth century.

This latter meaning—“change from the roots”—is what we in the FAA intend when we call ourselves “radicals.” We are social anarchists (AKA class struggle anarchists or libertarian socialists). We struggle to change society at its very roots. We support reform as a temporary “band-aid” to alleviate human suffering and improve social wellbeing, but we also know that unless certain problems are addressed at the root level, there will never be a lasting solution to poverty, oppression, pollution, or exploitation. In modern society, the roots of these problems lie in the following:

I. Capitalism, which concentrates wealth and power into a small number of private hands,

II. the hierarchical social structures that both prop up capitalism and arise from it—these are often abbreviated as “the State,” but they also include corporations, political parties, certain organized religions, international bodies like the IMF and World Bank, and so on (let’s call the whole lot “the State+”), along with,

III. the ideological structures that both prop up Capitalism and the State+ and arise from them, including patriarchy, “queerphobia,” racism, white supremacy, and any other form of systemic oppression.

Therefore, when we call ourselves “radical,” we mean that we oppose I, II, and III, and we struggle, however possible, to dismantle them and to replace them with something more humane, more democratic, and less destructive to humanity and our natural world. Note the word “dismantle,” and that nowhere in our definition do we call for violence, or use words and phrases like “kill,” “burn,” “destroy,” or “Death to America.” In fact, since we are seeking a freer, safer, fairer world, we hope that such radical changes can happen

18 MILLION DIE EACH YEAR

from poverty-related causes; ONE THIRD OF ALL HUMAN DEATHS.



Global agricultural production can feed more than

1.18 TIMES THE GLOBAL POPULATION. 868 MILLION PEOPLE GO HUNGRY.

There are more than 5 VACANT HOMES
FOR EVERY HOMELESS PERSON IN THE U.S.



77.5% OF U.S. HOUSEHOLDS ARE IN DEBT.

1 in 7 U.S. residents is being pursued by a debt collector.

CAPITALISM DOESN'T WORK

#ORGANIZE LOCALLY #GLOBAL REVOLUTION #DEMOCRATIZE THE ECONOMY

RESOURCES: STRIKEDEBT.ORG OCCUPYTOGETHER.ORG/GETINVOLVED/#MOBILIZE
LIBCOM.ORG IWW.ORG ITSOURCEECONOMY.US USWORKER.COOP

STATISTICAL SOURCES: FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORG. OF THE UNITED NATIONS. AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL, USA.

entirely peacefully. Whether or not these hopes are realistic is impossible to know at present, but an anarchist never lets uncertainty shake her resolve.

So, if by “radical” we simply mean “addressing the root of the problem,” then it’s clear that being radical, in and of itself, has nothing to do with being violent or brave or brazen or outrageous. In fact, brazen and outrageous behavior can be used quite successfully for reactionary purposes, as Mr. Trump has illustrated nicely this year. So, returning to Iran’s moderate “Green revolutionaries,” it’s no surprise that we don’t consider them to be real “radicals.” But, by the very same definition, a lot of self-proclaimed “radical” activists—especially those with an identitarian focus (more on this below)—aren’t genuinely radical either. In the next section, we’ll explain exactly who we’re talking about and why.

Neoliberalism with a Radical Face

To start with something concrete, radical politics must include an element of “prefigurative” politics, meaning that the way we organize now

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LETTER FROM THE BLACK FLAG EDITOR

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has to, at bare minimum, attempt to look somewhat like what we want for the future. So, if we want direct democracy for all in the future, we have to practice some version of direct democracy in our organization (our “collective”); if we want gender equality in the future, we should strive for gender equality in our collective, and so on. If you’re not engaged in prefigurative practices at some level, you’re very likely perpetuating, rather than opposing, the oppressive systems (I, II, and III) discussed in the previous section. The old feminist adage that the “personal is political” and the Gandhian reminder to “be the change you want to see in the world” both express an aspect of this prefigurative approach.

The problem is, precious few self-professed “radical” groups—even those that claim to be anarchist—make real attempts to practice prefigurative politics. Instead, in our experience, they usually fall into one of the following organizational-ideological traps:

- **Elitist-vanguardism:** The belief that your group alone has discovered the one correct analysis or blueprint for social change. This belief is poison to social movements because it tends to prevent collaboration or coalition-building. If your group has all the answers, why should it collaborate with the ignorant and wrongheaded groups that don’t see it your way? What reason does your group have to behave in a principled manner toward other groups, given that they’re not “real comrades” anyway? In our experience, elitist-vanguardists tend to hoard information, compete for power, and, in the worst cases, betray outright anyone that they view as “competitors.”
- **Identitarianism:** Identitarians are the PC language police, the social justice warriors, the “privilege-checkers” and “call-out” queens, the identity politicians. These activists tend to see identity-based oppression as the only important issue worth struggling around, and even when they pay lip service to anti-capitalist struggle they usually have a poor (or nonexistent) analysis of the role that capitalism and economic class (or even political power) play in maintaining the oppressive status quo. They also tend to have essentialist views on race and gender, which means, in simple terms, that they think identity = politics. So, for example, they act as if there is a single correct politics that all “people of color” share (or ought to share) simply by virtue of having ancestors “of color.” If an individual person-of-color’s views deviate from these “correct” politics, it must be because of some “privilege” that that individual enjoys which clouds their judgment (e.g. they are light-skinned and therefore sometimes mistaken for white, granting them some degree of “white privilege”). We’ve written extensively about the problems of identitarian politics in previous issues (and the Adolph Reed piece in this issue offers further insights). What’s important here is that, since identitarians are essentialists, they believe that individual “leaders” can represent, and speak on behalf of, entire identity groups. A person of color who fancies herself a leader does not need to bother with consensus, voting, discussion, debate, and so on—why bother when her identity itself endows her with the proper politics? Why indeed, if anyone who disagrees with her must be either a secret bigot or blinded by “privilege”? Obviously, this approach does not lend itself toward prefigurative politics, democratic decision-making, or any kind of truly radical social change.
- **Lesser Evil-ism:** This camp is mostly made up of fascism-alarmists. That is, they are so afraid that radical right wingers (the Klan, Nazis, fascists) are going to rise up and take over at any minute that they implicitly support any sort of “lesser evil” (e.g. Bernie Sanders) that they think offers a plausible alternative. This group has good intentions—who among us wants the fascists to take over?—but they suffer from a failure of imagination regarding organizing. If the fascists were poised to take over, shouldn’t we try to build a mass leftwing counter-movement, rather than just select a “lesser evil” candidate and pray for the best? If rifle-bearing Brown Shirts came goose-stepping down Pennsylvania Avenue, would they really be deterred by an elderly centrist-progressive senator from Vermont? Lesser evil-ism is also invoked to prevent free-market fundamentalism (neoliberalism) or imperialist war-mongering from accelerating or expanding, and is the reason why liberals, progressives, and some misguided “radicals” keep voting for Democrats. Since these Democrats do nothing to halt neoliberalism or imperialism, but rather expand both with

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reckless glee—despite sometimes employing empty rhetoric about “workers,” and “equal rights”—it’s clear that lesser evil-ism cannot be “radical” in any meaningful sense.

These categories, furthermore, are not mutually exclusive. Many (perhaps most?) identitarians are also elitist-vanguardists, for example, and some groups (or individuals) are simultaneously all three. But with or without overlap, all three share one common trait: they are not remotely radical according to the definition we’re using here. In fact, each category, intentionally or not, tends to support the dominant neoliberal consensus. Elitist-vanguardism is good for neoliberalism because by its very nature it helps to break up radical movements and prevent movement-building. Identitarianism is good for neoliberalism because its culture of call-outs, outrages over minor slights, and petty in-fighting over trivial issues of language and representation also tends to break up radical movements and prevent movement-building (to see how easily identitarianism can be squared with neoliberalism, consider Adolph Reed’s pithy observation that 1% of the population owning 99% of the wealth would be fair in strictly identitarian

terms “provided that roughly 12% of the 1% were black, 12% were Latino, 50% were women, and whatever the appropriate proportions were LGBT people”). Finally, lesser evil-ism is good for neoliberalism because it siphons and re-directs radical energies into supporting neoliberal candidates and (you guessed it), thus helps to break up radical movements and prevent movement-building.

Obviously, in order to transcend the neoliberal consensus, a truly radical movement—a movement for change from the roots—is needed. We’re not claiming to have all the answers about how such a movement could be built—that would be inaccurate, and would smack of elitist-vanguardism. However, we do know this: the movement begins where these destructive tendencies end. We need to identify elitist-vanguardism, identitarianism, and lesser evil-ism as the dead ends that they are, and discard them for something more radical and more effective. Until we can learn to do that, our hopes for root-level change will remain what they are today: un-watered seeds beneath the neoliberal snow.

For anarchism, always.
Your radical Black Flag editor

TWO PRISON RADIO PIECES BY MUMIA

Reprinted from <http://www.prisonradio.org/>

As we print this, Mumia's health situation is precarious. He suffers from hepatitis C, but he and 10,000 other prisoners in Pennsylvania with the same illness are being denied access to a new treatment that is 95% effective in curing the disease. Denying the cure not only increases a patient's suffering, but also increases medical costs as the disease develops into cirrhosis, liver cancer, and ultimately death.

Several radical and social justice organizations are struggling for the rights of Mumia and his fellow prisoners. Please visit the website of the International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal (<http://www.freemumia.com/>) to find out how you can help. —Black Flag editors.

Ehrlichman: "War on drugs really about 'bout blacks and hippies"

By Mumia Abu-Jamal

3/24/16

For the youth of today, the name John Ehrlichman rings no bells.

For people who lived through the '60s, it is either famous or notorious. The name references a former high-ranking member

of the White House staff, a close aide to former President Richard M. Nixon and one of the so-called "White House plumbers"—men who were at the very heart of the infamous Watergate scandal.

What makes his name re-ring an old bell is the revelations made some 22 years ago to the magazine, *Harper's*, where officials spoke openly and honestly about the political machinations underlying the so-called "War on Drugs" launched by the Nixon administration in the hot midst of the Vietnam War.

According to Ehrlichman, the "war" was launched as a "political tool" to attack two radical communities: Blacks and antiwar hippies (the youth of the era). It was a political way of waging attacks on both groups without seeming to do so. And it worked—splendidly. The "war" allowed cops-armed with this corrupt "law" to kick down doors, raid apartments, lock up people—all in the name of "saving them from the scourge of drugs."

Herr Ehrlichman told *Harper's*: "Did we know we were lying about the drugs? Of course we did."

Now, decades after the press, the courts, the intelligentsia of the nation had signed onto this ignoble, corrupt campaign, the truth emerges. It wasn't about

drugs. It never was. It was about Politics.

Mao used to say: "Politics is war without bloodshed." How true those words seem today. For, the wretched "war on drugs," really a war on the poor, the Black, the radical, the hip, has devastated whole communities, created the Leviathan of the world's largest prison system, and cast countless souls into the hatred-infested holes and netherworlds of prison, probation and death.

The war, still being waged in cities and communities across the nation, was a trick spat by the late "Tricky Dick" Nixon, and bought into by state government and police powers, to wreck dark communities—those unwilling to vote Republican, by the way—in the name of the unjust, intrusive, fake "law."

That, according to Ehrlichman, was its intent: to "disrupt communities"; communities of resistance to the State.

The war on Drugs was lost before it began, because it was all based on a lie. --©'16maj

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TWO PRISON RADIO PIECES BY MUMIA-CON'T

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The war against white men

By Mumia Abu-Jamal

1/7/16

Several days ago, while viewing the Sunday weekly CNN show hosted by Fareed Zakaria, I saw a segment documenting the rising death tolls of white men, especially those between the ages of 45 and 54 years.

The causes were various: drug overdoses, car accidents, alcoholism, and suicides.

Of course, some of these other causes, such as drugs and car accidents, are actually hidden suicides. No other group showed such sharp increases.

I think it intriguing, especially when class and education were factored in: working-class and high school diploma, or less.

I've since read half a dozen articles—some scientific, others journalistic—from a variety of publications, many speculating on causes: failing health; low wages; fear of a changing, browning America, etc.

Yet none of these articles touched on what initially came to mind.

I'll call it the NAFTA Effect (for

"CONVENTIONAL WISDOM WOULD HAVE ONE BELIEVE THAT IT IS INSANE TO RESIST THIS, THE MIGHTIEST OF EMPIRES, BUT WHAT HISTORY REALLY SHOWS IS THAT TODAY'S EMPIRE IS TOMORROW'S ASHES; THAT NOTHING LASTS FOREVER, AND THAT TO NOT RESIST IS TO AQUIESCE IN YOUR OWN OPPRESSION. THE GREATEST FORM OF SANITY THAT ANYONE CAN EXERCISE IS TO RESIST THAT FORCE THAT IS TRYING TO REPRESS, OPPRESS, AND FIGHT DOWN THE HUMAN SPIRIT."

-MUMIA ABU-JAMAL

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the North America Free Trade Agreement), which sent millions of manufacturing jobs across the border, and U.S. businesses in search of cheaper labor. For me, this reason seemed obvious, especially since NAFTA was so widely known; for it affected jobs on both sides of the border, forcing wages lower and lower.

An owner, for example, faced with union demands for higher wages, might easily threaten to go overseas to frighten labor leaders into concessions—even givebacks!

NAFTA, the gift of Clinton I, was an executive betrayal of labor

which fought for and funded the presidential campaign of William Jefferson Clinton.

He betrayed them by making a sweet deal with the business class—a now-rich white guy waged war on poor and working-class white guys, to enrich other white guys.

It ain't the only factor, but I'm convinced it is a factor.

Americans—once again—voting for their own betrayers. --© '16maj



F@@ HOLDS ANNUAL CLOTHES GIVEAWAY

On the morning of December 25th, 2015, the Free Association of Anarchists (F@@) conducted its 6th Annual Skid Row Clothing Giveaway, on the corner of 6th and San Pedro streets in Downtown Los Angeles. Clothing items, monetary offerings, and other items were collected throughout the year from many generous individuals and groups to help support the Giveaway.

The southwest corner of the intersection that includes The Midnight Mission was a hive of activity for the residents of the Skid Row neighborhood, as many found their way to tables of clothing items that were available.

In addition to approximately twenty large bags of pants, t-shirts, dress clothes, sweaters, and shoes—of which over 99% of all items were claimed by Skid Row residents in need—the F@@ was able to supply

dozens of bottles of water, wrapped snack items, and rain ponchos in a variety of sizes.

The F@@ offers its gratitude to those that collected and gave items, money, and time in helping make this event possible. All of your efforts are sincerely appreciated, and we look forward to working together again next year. —PolarBearUno



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